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## Loyola Department of Pathology Upgrades Dictation System and Streamlines Workflow with Voicebrook

### Case Study Summary

#### Business Needs

The Department of Pathology at Loyola wanted to upgrade an aging dictation system, streamline the case workflow and embrace current technology.

#### Solution

Voicebrook VoiceOver – a speech recognition and digital dictation system with reporting tools and workflow specifically for Pathology

#### Benefits

- LIS-integrated solution tailored for pathology
- Voicebrook's skilled, professional staff provide on-site system installation and training
- Streamlined workflow with fewer handoffs
- Up to 40% improvement in turnaround time for biopsies
- Department now completely free of manual transcription
- Templates simplify report creation
- Preliminary gross reports now available immediately

#### Observations

Good transcriptionists have become hard to find, but great automated transcription software is now easy to find – with Voicebrook.

### About Loyola University Medical Center

Loyola University Medical Center is a leading-edge provider of health care and clinical research. Located in Illinois, it includes two major medical campuses and more than 30 suburban clinics. The Department of Pathology at Loyola processes 25,000 surgical cases per year. Staff includes 17 pathologists, 17 residents, 6 fellows, 2 pathologists' assistants and 3 grossing technicians.

### Upgrade Dictation System

The Department of Pathology at Loyola University Medical Center used an aging dictation system for transcription and wanted to upgrade to a current technology. A small staff of 2.4 full-time equivalent transcriptionists supported the entire department. Gross reports were dictated during the day and transcription occurred during the day and night shifts. If a transcriptionist called in sick or was otherwise unable to finish all reports, the pathologist could not complete the diagnosis and sign out the case, even though the slides were available. The gross description must be included on the patient report. The department wanted a solution that would streamline the workflow and eliminate transcription delays.

Good transcriptionists are increasingly hard to find. "It's an aging profession and not as many people are learning how to do it when they graduate from high school or go to a technical school," said Steve Pinheiro, Manager of Anatomic Pathology and Cytology for Loyola. Loyola considered outsourcing transcription to a third party, but this required

sending audio files offsite and they were concerned about quality and turnaround time.

Several years prior, the Department of Radiology at Loyola had successfully implemented an automated voice transcription system. The department had a large transcription group, so it was easy to make a financial justification the investment. For a small transcription group like Pathology's, the numbers were not as compelling, but software pricing had fallen substantially since that time.

### **Voicebrook VoiceOver – Tailored for Pathology**

Phyllis Straff, LIS Project Manager for Loyola, learned about Voicebrook VoiceOver at a Sunquest conference and was excited to evaluate it. The VoiceOver solution includes speech recognition, digital dictation and reporting tools, templates and workflow designed specifically for Pathology. It integrates directly with a department's LIS. VoiceOver provides the most comprehensive pathology-specific dictionary on the market, ensuring accurate dictation. Everyone – grossing techs, PAs, residents – can dictate and automatically transcribe their own reports. Case workflow no longer depends on transcriptionist availability.

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- Steve Pinheiro, Manager of Anatomic Pathology and Cytology, Loyola

“We looked at the fact that surrounding hospitals, especially those with teaching programs, had already gone to Voicebrook. It was the wave of the future,” said Pinheiro. The department considered competitive solutions from other vendors, but none offered Voicebrook's strong pathology-specific capabilities, integration, training and support. Colleen Jarosz, Administrative Director of the Lab in the Department of Pathology, added, “Voicebrook takes the lead and manages the project. All the macros are already built – that would have been a life's work for us. We have one LIS manager for the system. That fact that these things were already built, tried and true, was a very big benefit.”

The Pathology Department sought and gained approval for the VoiceOver purchase at two levels – Loyola itself and at Trinity Health, the hospital group to which Loyola belongs. They presented a financial justification to management. Critically, they had the full support of the CIO, who understood the value of automated transcription and VoiceOver's pathology-specific features and integration.

Voicebrook field personnel helped deploy the system and train the department staff. “The Voicebrook project manager was great, keeping the project on task, informing us and shepherding any problems through. All the people sent on site were very good,” said Jarosz.

During the “soft” rollout, the old system was kept running while the staff learned to use the new one. Within 3 weeks of going live, 49% of dictation was done with VoiceOver. At 7 weeks, it was 90%. Eventually they were able to turn off the old system and operate 100% in Voicebrook.

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### Faster, Streamlined Case Workflow

Today the case workflow is streamlined and there are fewer handoffs. Performance metrics for the new system already look positive. Within 4 months of the rollout, the case turnaround time was on par with or slightly faster than the previous system. By the fifth month, they reported 90% of biopsies turned around within 2 days, compared to 64% for the month one year prior, and the median turnaround for large cases was 3 days, down from 3.8 days. In other words, they experienced up to 40% improvement in turnaround time with the new system.

The staff consistently use templates in their reporting. “We make really good use of templates,” said Jarosz. “Our lead PA has done a marvelous job working with Voicebrook to get them set and then teaching all the PAs and residents how to use them properly.”

The Department of Pathology uses front-end speech for ALL cases and is transcription free. It no longer carries the overhead of 2.4 transcriptionists (2 full-time, 2 part-time). Preliminary gross reports are immediately available to everyone in the department. That was not the case under the previous system. “That adds value no matter how you look at it,” said Pinheiro. Another benefit is high availability. The VoiceOver software runs on individual desktops, so even if network or servers are down, the staff can continue to dictate reports using the VoiceOver downtime procedures.

With the old dictation system replaced by modern speech recognition and digital dictation technology, the Loyola Department of Pathology is transformed. Labor is saved by eliminating manual transcription. More importantly, case workflow is simplified and no longer subject to transcription delays.

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